HOUSE of the SUN

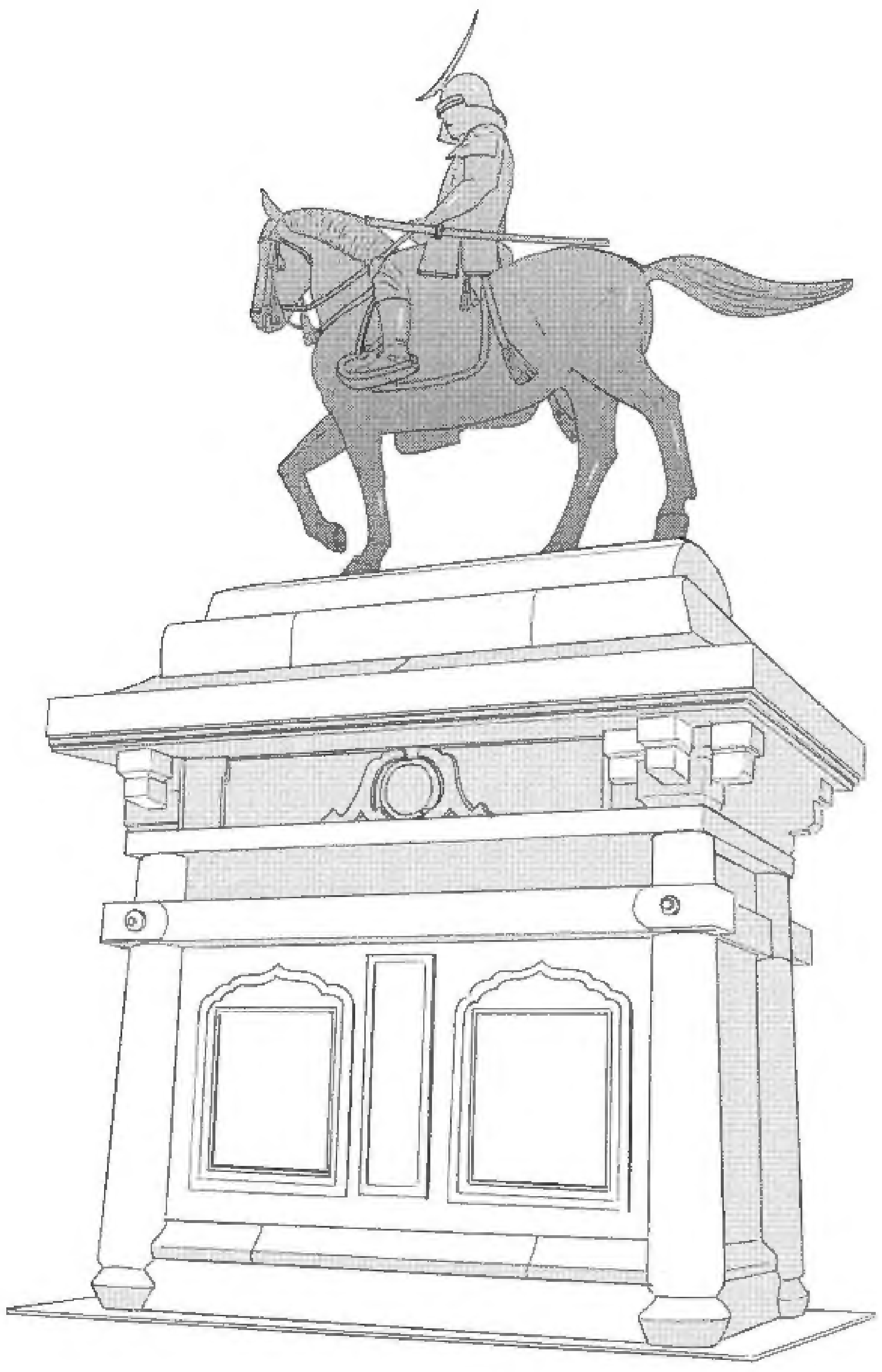
7

Taamo

HOUSE of the SUN

7

by Taamo



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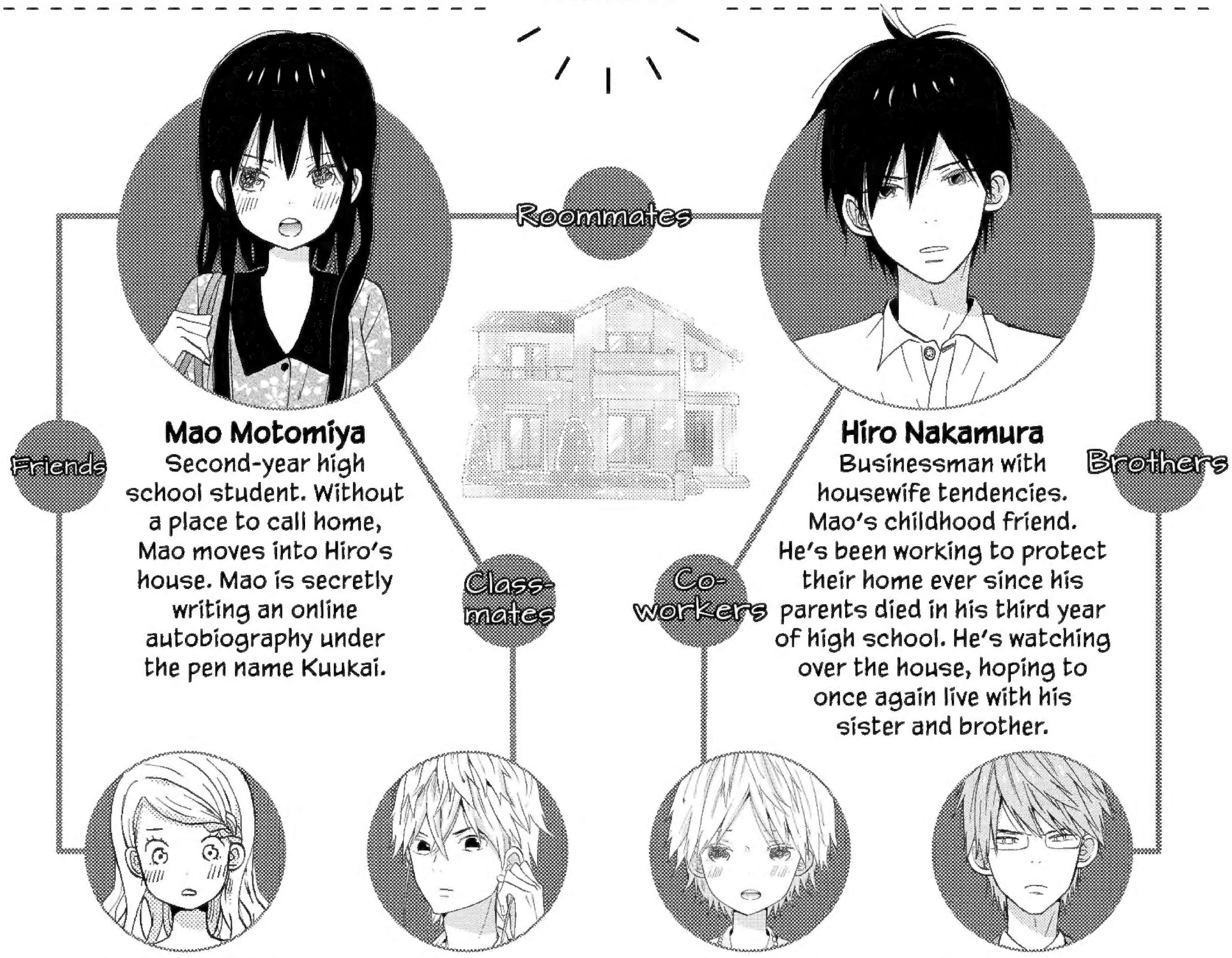
CHARACTER



Mao Motomiya
Second-year high school student. Without a place to call home, Mao moves into Hiro's house. Mao is secretly writing an online autobiography under the pen name Kuukai.

Hiro Nakamura
Businessman with housewife tendencies. Mao's childhood friend. He's been working to protect their home ever since his parents died in his third year of high school. He's watching over the house, hoping to once again live with his sister and brother.

Chi-chan (Chihiro)
Mao's friend. She likes Oda-kun and confessed to him, but...

Oda-kun
Mao's classmate since first year. Had a thing for Mao, but was rejected and is heartbroken.

Sugimoto-san
Hiro's coworker. She's a fan of Mao's novel. Her nickname is "Radical." She likes Hiro.

Daiki Nakamura
Hiro's little brother. In his second year of high school. He moved in with an uncle after their parents died, but he has decided to return to the Nakamura house.

STORY

After her father gets remarried, Mao feels like she no longer has a home. Aiming for independence, she is now staying with her childhood friend Hiro. Hiro is kind and takes good care of her, and she begins to fall for him.

Mao is then confronted with her friend Radical-san's frank and direct emotions towards Hiro, and she finds her own feelings becoming stronger.

At the same time, Daiki moves back into the Nakamura home, harboring secret feelings for Mao. What will happen now that the two of them are in the same school, in the same class...?!

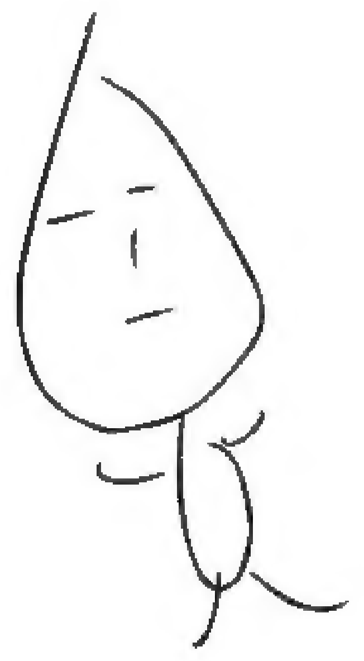
Hello, it's Taamo.
Thank you very much for picking up volume seven! I'll be so happy if you enjoy reading it! Even though I'm a *shoujo* manga artist, sometimes the guys who read my manga think I'm a man.

story 25

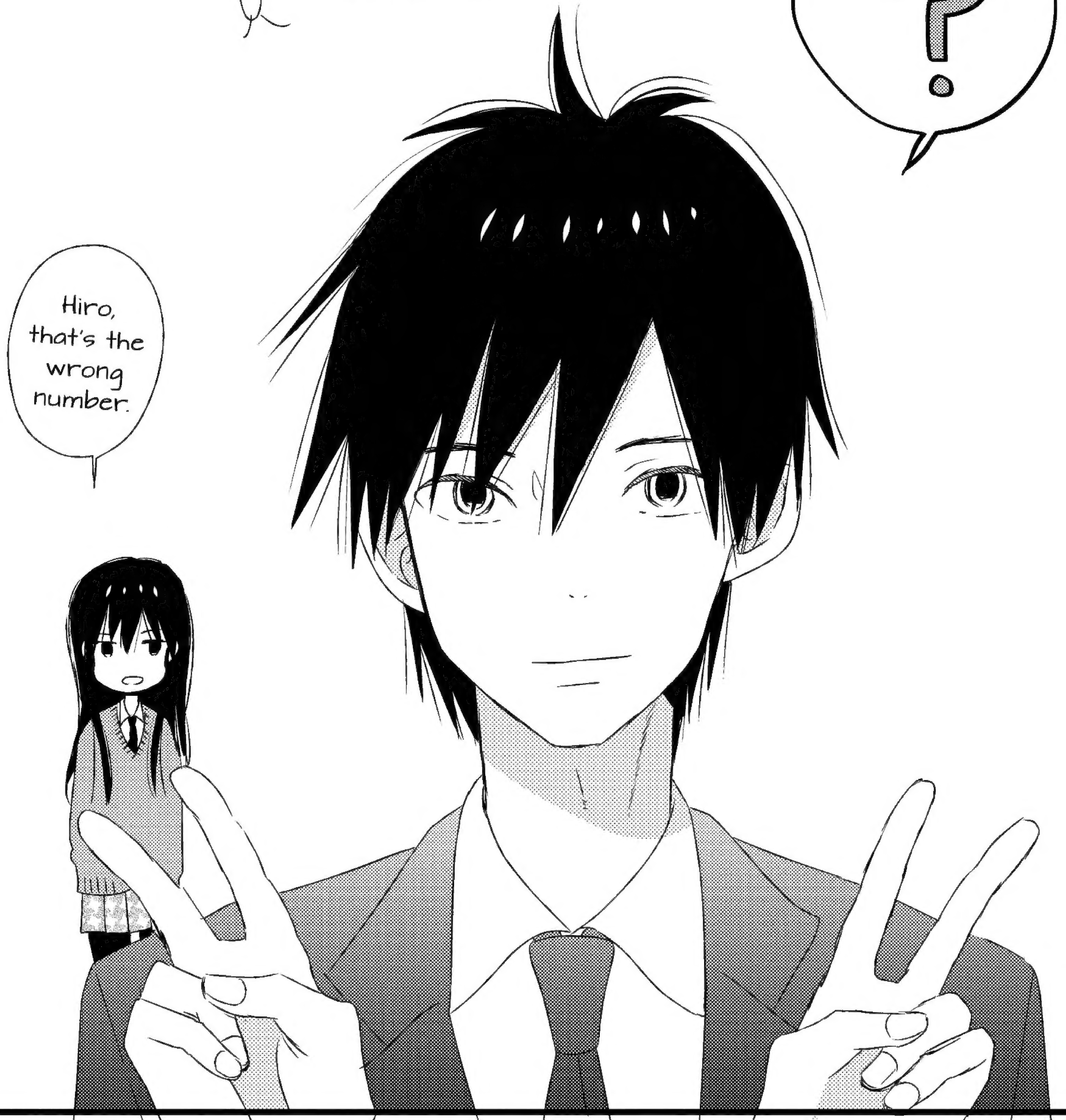
First Love

I'd never been to Sendai until
I went to do research for this,
but it's a super great place!
It was so cool, even though it was
summer. The food was really delicious,
too. I want to go back someday.

-Taamo

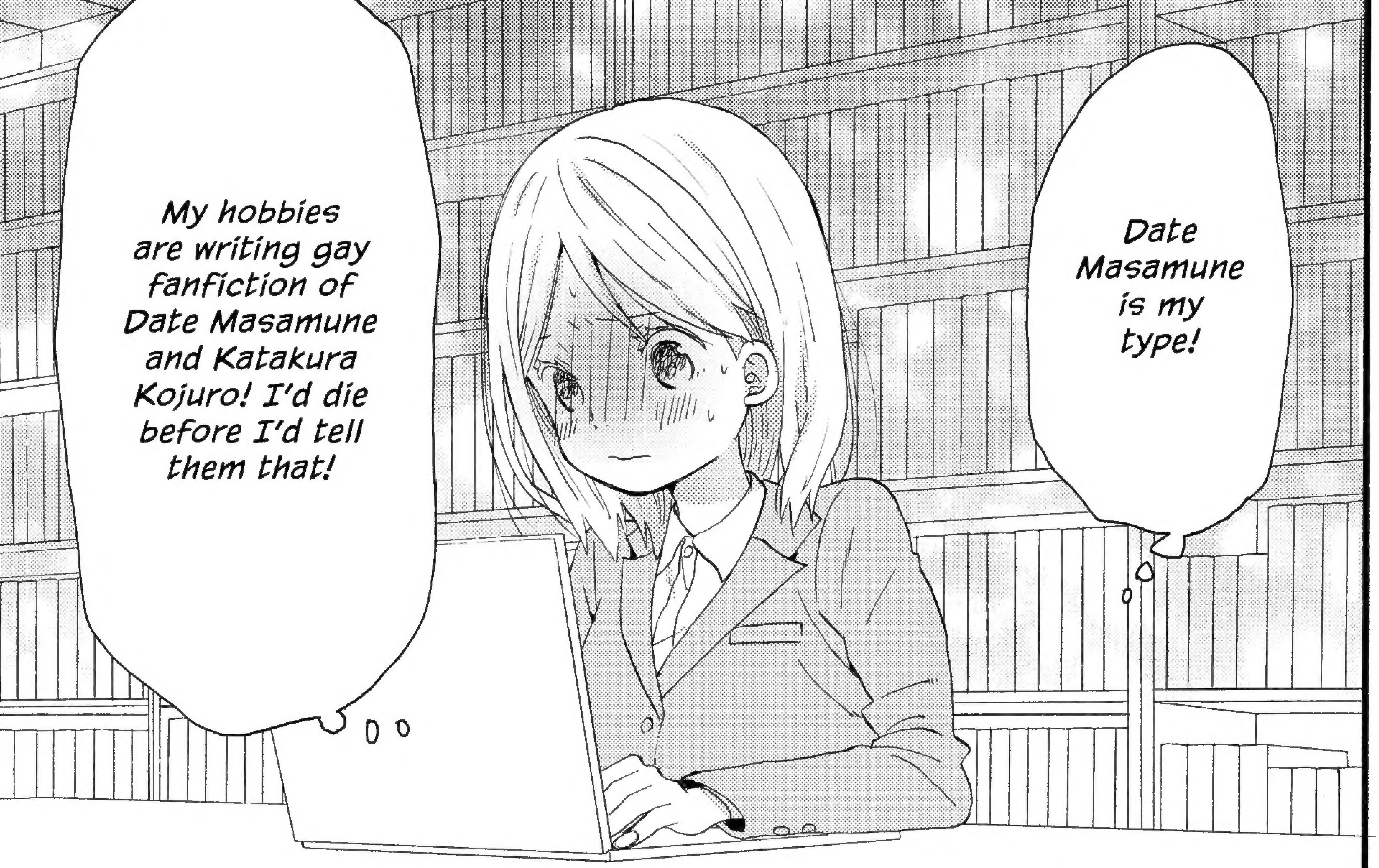


Well, see you again
in volume eight. Sorry
if my handwriting is
hard to read.


?
Hiro, that's the wrong number.

Everyone else thinks it's so easy...
...just to say...
..."I have a crush."

Sugimoto-san, are you okay?
You look so pale.
Oh... Just thinking about how you're really going to quit...
Well, of course. That's why you were hired, after all.
But-but-but-but... everybody who works here is a man!
My last job was all women!
Ah, I see. Your boyfriend will get jealous.
No...
Oh. Well, please put this data in as soon as possible.
No, no...
Sugimoto-san, how old are you?
That's not it!
Quiet, you.
Don't leer at a young girl.
Do you have a boyfriend?
Any hobbies?
What's your type?
I was in girls' schools from middle school on...
...so I have no inoculation against the cooties of real-life guys!

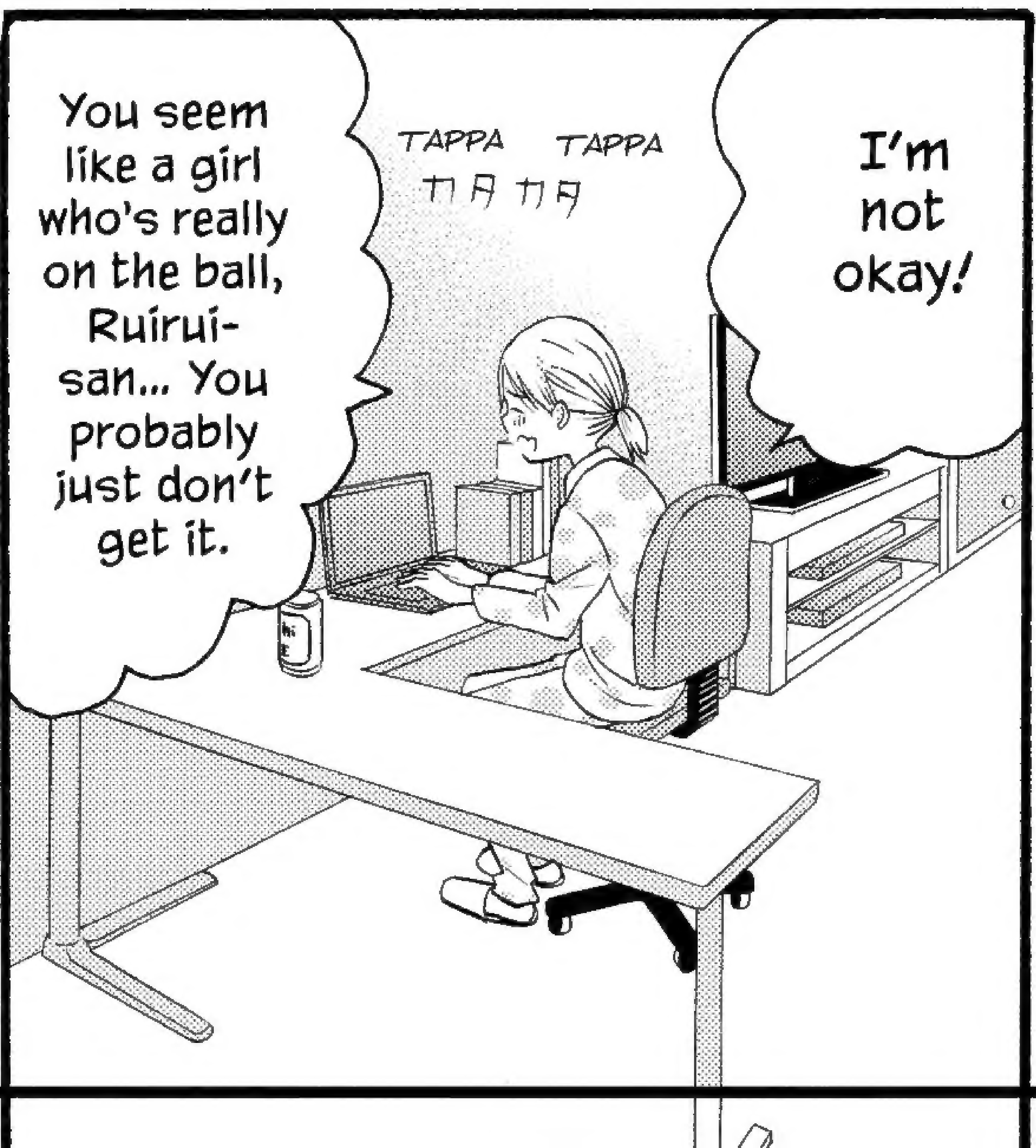

Date Masamune is my type!
My hobbies are writing gay fanfiction of Date Masamune and Katakura Kojuro! I'd die before I'd tell them that!

SUGIMOTO

I'm sooo bad with 3D dudes lmao. I don't even want to go to work anymore... I just wanna sit in my house and be gross about Ma-kun.

RUIRUI

You can do it lol. I can't believe you're that bad w/ dudes. You okay? Ma-kun's so cute tho.


I'm not okay!
TAPPA TAPPA
カタカタ
You seem like a girl who's really on the ball, Ruirui-san... You probably just don't get it.

RUIRUI

A girl w/it together? lmao

SUGIMOTO

That's just the image I get! im too drunk I cant type right. Do you have a mic?

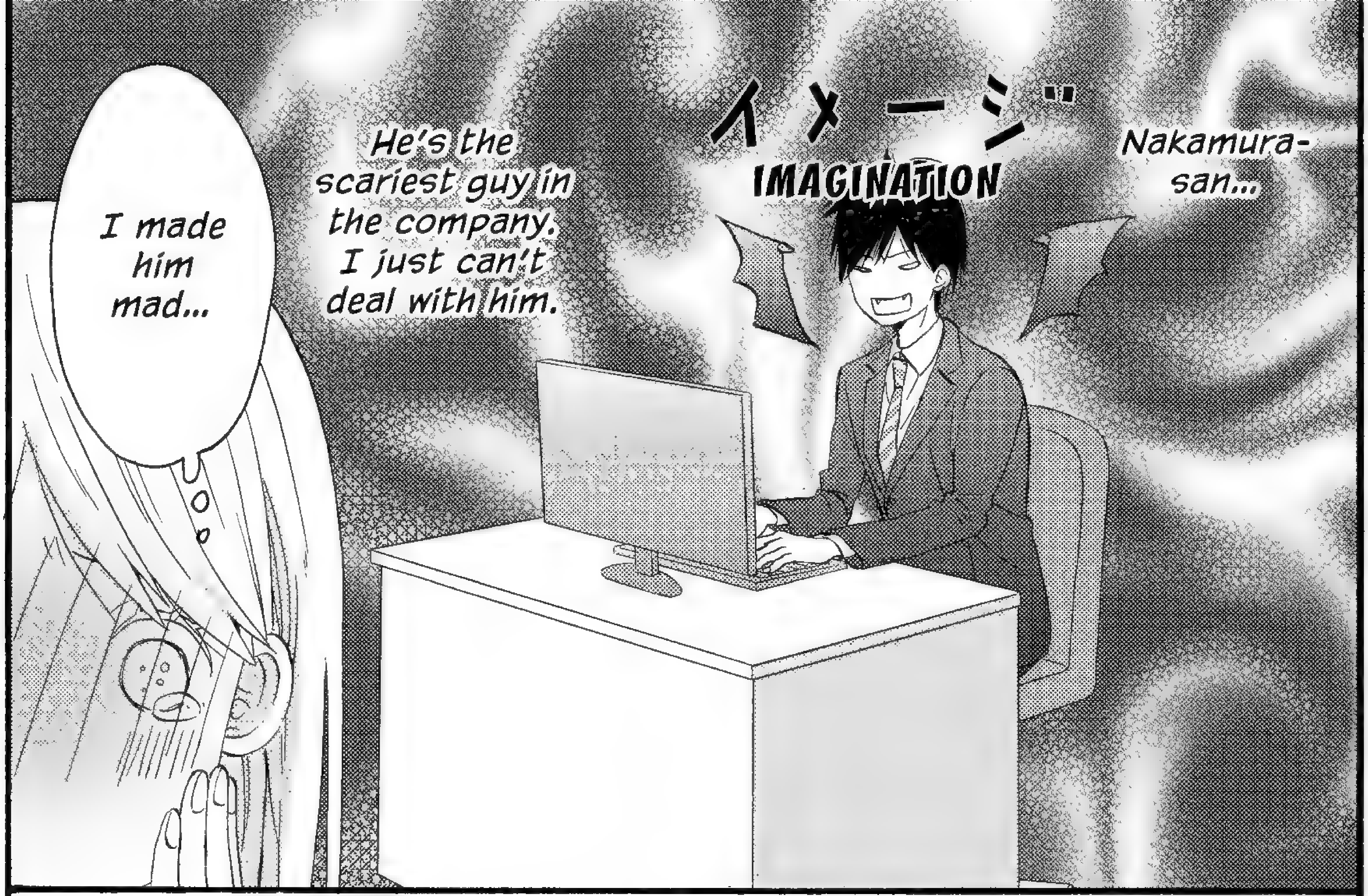
RUIRUI

I can't. >< Sorry!

ぴょこ

PWING

Aw, man.
That sucks.
shi
I'll give the fanfic site a quick look before I head to bed.
Hey, Sugimoto-san, I bet...
...people tell you you're cute all the time, right?
Here it is...
Don't you get it?
A guy has never in my life called me cute!
Good morning.
Excuse me, but that's my desk.
Sorry.
ROLL
ROLL
ガラガラ
ガラガラ
ROLL


Nakamura-san...
イメージ
IMAGINATION
He's the scariest guy in the company. I just can't deal with him.
I made him mad...

RUIRUI

What the heck lol

PWING
ぴょこ

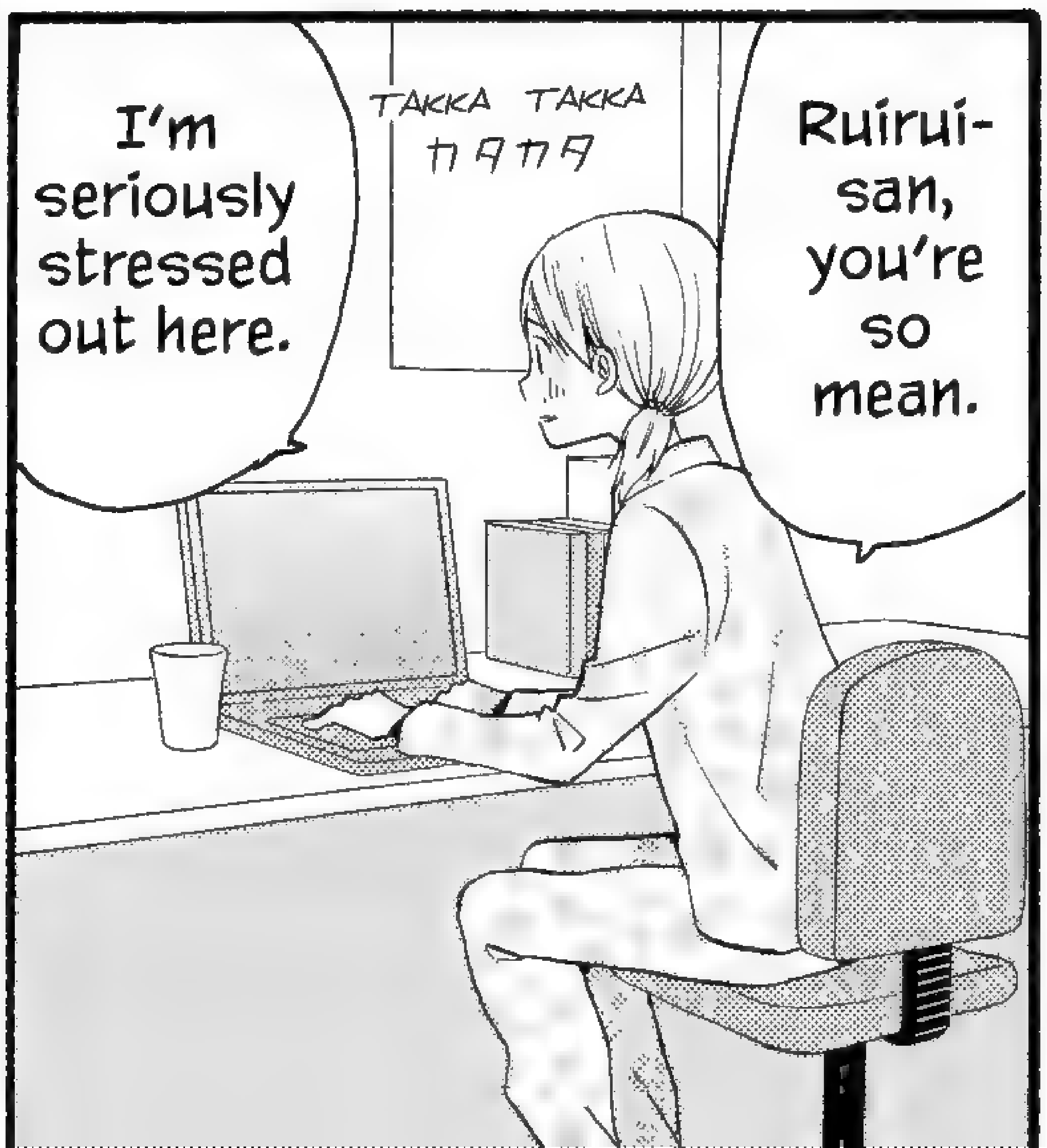
SUGIMOTO

Well, his face is always like this: (¯–¯)
and I just can't get close to him lol

RUIRUI

r u a kid lolllll

PWING
ぴょこ


Ruirui-san, you're so mean.
TAKKA TAKKA
カタカタ
I'm seriously stressed out here.

RUIRUI

Well, I'm seriously loling. Deciding you don't like somebody before you really get a chance to talk to them is a waste, I think.

RUIRUI

If you talk to him, and he sucks, then Ma-kun and I can...

Or wait, just think about MasaKoju and forget about dumb real life lol

HEE
HEE
ふっ
ふっ
カタ
カタ
カタ
TAKKA
TAKKA
TAKKA
You're a really good person, Ruirui-san.
I guess I'll try it.

G-good morning!
Good morning, Sugimoto-san!
Good morning.
Oh, can you enter this data for me?
カタ カタ カタ カタ
TAKKA TAKKA
Oh, Sugimoto-san, Nakamura told me that he called his little sister for the first time in a while and she told him she was too tired to deal with his excitement.
So that's why he's acting so cold.
Don't mind him!

Why youuuu!
What, it's true!
Cut all that out!
So you want me to lie?
Owwww!
...
They're really good friends...
Horsing around like that.
I know! If I imagine that they're together and Fujita-san is the top with Nakamura-san as the bottom, I won't be afraid anymore!
I can be confident because the top and bottom are busy loving each other!
She's really staring at us...
FANGIRL
ホモォ…
コポ PLSH
PLSH
コポ PLSH
コポ

コポコポ
PLSH
PLSH
Now that I'm thinking of them as a ship to fangirl over, I feel a lot less anxious.
Fujita-san would be a lovey-dovey top, I bet...
Ah, but Nakamura-san could be a power bottom, too...
Seducing him in that suit...
Ah.
YEEEK!!
That was loud.
I'm sorry, do you want a drink?
Sure, can I get a coffee?
Okay.
I'm so embarrassed.
You seem to be getting used to things.
Thanks.
Hm?
At work.

Well, at first you were so stiff.
Your work's gotten faster, too.
Thank you very much.
The power bottom complimented me...
Did you make up with your sister?
Oh, my sister... Haven't heard from her since then.
Oh, I see. I have a little sister back home, too, so I understand.
They can act standoffish.
I hope you two can make up.
Yeah.
Me, too.
And thank you very much.

He smiled!
Thanks for the coffee, too.
It's nothing.
Whoa... I'm...
...talking normally to him.
And from then on...
...somehow it was very simple in my brain...
...to talk...
...totally normally...
...to him...

I did it.
...every day.
I'm a real nerd who loves history and boy's love... I haven't got anything that would make a normal person fall in love with me. I can only talk to my Internet friends.
I don't even watch TV. I've got no cute hobbies.
男と女の
MEN AND WOMEN'S BODIES
I've never had a crush on anyone before...
So have you gone to that shop that opened up a little while ago?
I'm bad with hair-dressers, too.
...so I can't talk about relation-ships.
So I had nothing to talk about.
But Naka-mura-san doesn't ask me questions like that...
...so I don't get nervous when I talk to him.
He won't embarrass me by calling me cute, either.

I had no experiences...
...to compare to...
...so I couldn't...
...get it.
Whoa! Cute!
What happened, Sugimoto-san?
Thank you very much.
Eeek!
I just wanted a change.
Don't tell me your heart was broken, Sugimoto?
Oh, no, nothing like that.
So, did you find a boyfriend?
About how many boyfriends have you had, Sugimoto?

No boyfriends.
I've never even had one.
Was I supposed to?
Well, I didn't, so I can't answer.
What do I do?
Excuse me, sir.
Hm?
I need your help with an issue on this case.
FWSH
FWSH
しっしっ
...

TOK TOK TOK
So embarrassed...
I can't believe...
Nakamura-san had to rescue me.
Are you okay?
YEEEK!
I-I'm sorry, I'm fine.
You just look so pale!
You need a break?
I have my gay love fantasy for these two...
...with Fujita-san as the top and Nakamura-san as the bottom.

When it comes to my fantasy settings...
...I'm always confident that they're in real love.
Smile, smile!
You have such a nice smile.
Right, Naka-mura?
And yet...
Yeah.
It's very nice.

...when Nakamura-san compliments me...
...somehow I feel so happy.

The main coordinator of the corporate retreat will be Sugimoto, and Nakamura will be her helper.
We'll leave it to you.
仙台ガイド
It's nice we decided on Sendai, right, Sugimoto?
Yes, sir!
Are you kidding? It's not enough with just Daiki and Mao's school trip...?
Coordinating with Nakamura-san!
And I'll be going to Sendai with him, too!
We can go to Aoba Castle and Ma-kun's grave, too.
Guess I just gotta do it.
I'd like to get this over quickly, so maybe we can go out to eat somewhere and have a little meeting?

*Guide to Sendai

Okay!
...So maybe we should go to that civil war-themed restaurant again!
Uhhh ...
We've been there a lot, can we go somewhere else?
Mao has been really nervous about Sugimoto-san lately...
I'd rather they not see each other.
...
If you say so.
I just know that if I want to get to know Nakamura-san better, I have to be brave enough to get to know Kuukai-san better, too.
いろは
*Iroha
Sorry, we're full up.
We're booked.
The wait is two hours.
Sorry.

Damn it, that's a Friday for you.
Isn't anywhere open?
Um...
Can we go to...
...the civil war restaurant?
...
Welcome back, Daiki-kun!
Aah, it's really nice to have a tall general who stands out!

Thanks so much for coming back.
Here's our fall menu.
Thank you.
So...
I heard a rumor, Motomiya-san!
I bet you and Daiki are all lovey-dovey now that you go to the same school!
There it is!
I'm so glad... That's what being young's for!
No, it's not!
カラ KLK
カラ KLK
カラ KLK
カラ KLK
Daiki! They've got the wrong idea about us again!
Oh, right. It's because we always come to work together.
That's right! Should we stagger our entry?
Does it really matter?
Let them have the wrong idea.

That makes it all a lot easier.
WHAAAA?!
Coming in at different times is too much of a pain.
Is it?
Is it really?
What else?
Black Sato sake on the rocks...
???
But if the person you like heard about it...
...they couldn't sleep at night.
They'll sleep.
But to be honest, that's not a problem.

...
Wh-what is it?
Was I slacking off?
TNK カラ TNK カラ TNK カラ TNK カラ
Ah.
They can't come here.
I see.
Kobe is so far away...
You can do it, Daiki!
I know I can.
So, what can I do?
Need to take an order in the Date room!
Understood!

Mao!
I'll go!
Do the rest of the drinks.
?
Understood!
What's with you, Hiro...
Why are you so okay with hurting Mao?
Hail and well met!

'Sup.
Oh, it's your brother!
Why is this place so empty?
Isn't it popular?
It's fairly popular, I think.
We just happen to have seating today.
It is but the two of you, I see?
How very fitting a pair you are.
Oh, not at all...
Dumbass, you'll freak Sugimoto-san out.
We're supposed to make plans for the corporate retreat.

Oh, yeah?
What d'you mean 'oh, yeah'?
Anyway, two draft beers.
Understood!
So your brother really has come home.
Yes.
That must be why he's looked so happy lately.
Ku—Mao-san...
...is living with the two of you.

Yes.
It's gotten nice and busy at home since Daiki came back.
And the two of them are in the same class at school, too.
They're friends!
Friends... Yeah, they are.
He sure talks...
There's no cultural festival this year...
Mao said crazy stuff like she wanted Daiki to put on cat ears and do a kitty cafe.
...a lot.
That house...
My parents built it because I selfishly asked them to.
I wanted us all to live there together.
But instead, we've all been separated.

I went through school after they died...
...thinking that everything happened because I was so selfish.
No...
Of course that's not true.
Of course I know that's not true now.
But I still want everyone to be able to live there together.
That hasn't changed since I was a child.
And recently, we've gotten just a bit closer.

I really...
...want to...
...make sure that he's happy.
Is...
...Kuukai-san a part...
...of why he's so happy now?
I haven't been thinking of anyone but myself.

I've been thinking of nothing but pushing my feelings on him.
It might have bothered him...
Even just by pushing him to come here...
...I've been ignoring Kuukai-san's feelings.
I'm sorry...
Do you want to go somewhere else?
Huh? What's the matter?
We've already ordered.
Let's figure out all that we can today, then go home.
I'm sorry.

Excuse meee!
Please be patient, my lord!
Wait, was that Hiro?
Daiki, is Hiro the one in the Date room?
The Date room is my responsibility.
Don't shirk your duties by going to see Hiro, okay?
Such false accusations...
RRRGH
Move aside!
Ah! A Chonmame is committing hara-kiri!
What?!
Ah!
ZOOM
Damn, I can't believe I fell for such a tired old ruse!
Dummy.

Mao-san... Um...
We've been asked to schedule the corporate retreat, so we came to have a meeting.
Corporate retreat...
Yes! We're going to Sendai! Ma-kun's Sendai!
...
Did they make up?
We've already managed to determine what we can for today, so we were thinking about getting the bill soon...
U-under-stood!
BEEP ピ
BEEP ピ
BEEP ピ
They're together...
ピ BEEP

ピ BEEP
ピ BEEP
ピ BEEP
Are they gonna go home?
ピ BEEP
Where's your stop on the train, Nakamura-san?
Oh, I've got to go back to work.
Ah! You do? I'm sorry to take you out at such a busy time.
Not at all, I'm the one who said we should. It was good.
And I got to see Mao's stupid face, too.
My face isn't stupid!
Looks pretty stupid to me.

Mao.
Did Hiro go home?
Yeah.
...
You're so nice, Daiki.
You were worried about me seeing Hiro with a woman.
That's got nothing to do with it.
Okay.
But thanks anyway.
I'm fine.

I'm sorry. You really didn't want to go to that restaurant, did you?
Huh?
Ah... Well, I was just worried you and Mao were still having a fight.
But it looks like I was worried over nothing.
You really care...
...about Mao-san, don't you?

What does...
...that smile mean?
When I first started at work, I really hated going in.
I'm so bad with men...
What?
Is that really true?
Yes.
I was so scared of you, Nakamura-san.
I guess we've cleared up that misunderstanding.
Yes! And now it's really fun to come to work!

What, really?
You didn't learn that from me.
You're always smiling...
Everyone says your smile makes them feel at ease.
They do?
Yes, and it's the same for me.
Good night.
I have to...
It's no use...
I just have to...

I have to tell him...
...that I like him...
...while we're in Sendai.
I'll do it.
But...
...if it doesn't go well...
...I just don't know...
...what I'm going to do.
I can't imagine it.

story 26
To Mao-chan:
It's been a while. How are you doing?
This weekend, we're going to have a birthday party for your little sister.
We'd really like it...
...if you could come home for it.
CLK
パチン

story 26

Future

ガチャ
KACHK
Welcome home.
Yah!
Daiki …
You're still up?
Uh, I'm home.
I've been studying.
Oh, yeah? Working hard.
You want a drink?
Thanks.
パキ
KRSH
I think she's a good person.
Who is?
The woman you brought to work today.

Oh.
Yeah, she is.
Yeah. And don't you two make a good couple?
Seriously.
Don't say stuff like that.
You'll upset Sugimoto-san.
She's, like...
She keeps things relaxed for everyone at work.
Anyway, it's not like that.
I feel bad for her.
She clearly has a thing for you, Hiro.
Wha?!
Yeah right.
High schoolers, jeez.
You don't think so? Mao and I agree, though.
Mao, too?

...
Is that why she's been acting so weird...?
...
Where's Mao?
She's asleep.
SKCH
SKCH
Hey.
Could you not bring that lady to our work anymore?
What, why not?
No reason.
Good night.

Hiro.
Welcome home.
Mao.
I'm home.
Weren't you sleeping?
I woke up.
FUMP
ボスッ

My dad's—
My stepmom sent me an e-mail.
My little sister's having a birthday party.
Yeah.
She sent me one, too.
You should go.
Yeah.

Your birthday's in April, isn't it?
うーん Hmm
That's a long way away.
Ooh...
We should throw you a party next year.
What, really?!
But I'm not a kid, though!
Why not? We went all-out when Daiki came home.
...
But aren't you busy in April?
Your mom always was...
I can still celebrate your birthday.
Are you sure?
Yeah.

Then I guess I'll let you go ahead and go do that for me.
Does that make any sense?
うぐ NGH
Shut up.
...
I wonder if I'll be back home by my birthday next year.

I hope you are.
...
Yeah.
Well, I better go to sleep.
ぴょん
FUP
Oh, yeah, that's right.
Hm, what's with that flat tone?
H-Hiro...
You have that corporate retreat...
You're going?
We'll, we're basically obligated to attend.
Sugimoto-san seems pretty happy to go to Sendai.

Yeah, she got all worked up about going to Date Masamune's this and that during the meeting.
I bet she was really worked up like crazy.
I want to go see Hina.
Oh, is that it?
Yeah.
That's right... I haven't had a chance to talk to my own sister.
We both have to do our best!
I'll go to bed, and you should, too!
Good night!
That pose is obnoxious!
Good night.

Only six months until next April, huh?
...
Aw... C'mon!
SHUFF SHUFF
ガシガシ
Why can't I truly wish from the bottom of my heart that Mao will be able to go home...?
*Civil War
TAKA TAKA
カチカチ
TAKA TAKA
カチカチ
TAKA TAKA

"I plan to attend the function..."
カチ カチ
TAKA TAKA
Too stiff? Yeah.
"I'll come!"
Too light? Yeah.
Maybe I'll have Daiki take a look.
He's not here yet?
S'cuse me!
?
You work here, don't you?
Yes.
He's a regular customer.
I'm a second-year at the college over there, and I'm a huge fan of the girls who work at this restaurant. Do you mind if I talk to you a little bit?
Your uniforms are really cute!
Wh-what is this?!
Is he picking me up? Is that it?!
Can you get the other girls so I can take a pic?
Mao.

Who's this?
A... a customer.
Do you need something?
Uh.
Your boyfriend?

Let's go home.
NOD
NOD
NOD
NOD
S-sorry!

That scared me.
You're a mess on the inside, but you look pretty good on the outside, so I'm sure stuff like that happens to you all the time.
Huh?! What are you saying, Daiki?!
Did you study too hard and go crazy?!
Plus, he was just interested in the uniforms.
Wait, what do you mean a mess on the inside?!
Anyway...
It made things easy, didn't it?
...
Daiki, that guy can't see us anymore!
ブンブン
FWIP FWIP
Leggo!

Okay.
ZOOM ZOOM ズンズン
ZOOM ZOOM ズンズン
...
What's wrong?
Why aren't you walking?
I forgot my glasses, so I can't see.
I thought I had them, so I tossed my contacts.
It's not like you to forget stuff.
Are your eyes really that bad?
I can't see your face unless I get about this close to you.
Whaaa?! That's way too close!

Ouch, stop.
It's still embarrassing to have you so close, Daiki.
Want to take my arm?
... Oh, well.
Why your arm?
YANK
Wah!
Hmm... Hiro started to hold my hand right away. Is Daiki the same?
I wonder if it's because they had Hina-chan?

Come to think of it, I haven't touched him lately.
I want to touch him...
But I can't think like that...
SQUEEZE
ぎゅ
A birthday present?

Don't you have a little sister at home? What do you think?
Hmm...
And stationary.
She really likes *Pretty Cure**.
Thanks, I'll write that down.
とんとん POKE POKE
カチカチ TAKA TAKA
You want me to go with you?
I have a sister, so I might know better than you.
Hey... I'm a girl, so I would definitely know better than you, Daiki...
And Hina's a third-year in middle school.
Then why not give her that Chonmame stationary set you haven't used?
And wrap it up yourself.
...
I really like it...
...but maybe that's good.
Oda-kuuun?
Motomiya-saaan? Can we talk to you?

**Pretty Cure* is an anime for little girls. *Glitter Force* in the U.S.

ガタッ
TNK
What's up?
Let's go, Motomiya.
Huh? Why me, too?
ぐりんっ
WHIRL
Did you do something wrong, Oda-kun?
Hm... Did I?
...
Hey.
I've been thinking this for just a little bit...
...do you have a thing for Mao, Daiki-kun?

You have a problem with that?
Wh— No! I-I don't have a problem with it...
You surprised me, admitting it like that.
It's only really a secret from Mao herself.
Wh-what about Mao's feelings ...?
For my brother? I know.

Wow... It must be really tough.
My feelings are one-sided, too, so I understand.
Right, you like Oda.
Whaaa?! How did you know?!
It's pretty obvious.
I'm so embarrassed...!
I can't believe you saw through me.
I wasn't really trying to be obvious about things, myself.
Whaa?
Why?
What do you mean, why?
Because he turned me down.
I don't know what to do.
I really should give up on him.

Just keep at it.
Mao turned him down, too.
So there's no reason to give up, is there?
Plus, he's a pain in my ass.
Hmm... Maybe you're right.

You haven't given up, either, have you, Daiki-kun?
I don't really feel like I need to give up at this point.
Maybe I'll keep trying, too.
Can I really do that?

Thanks, Daiki-kun.
I didn't do anything.
But it must be a struggle.
Mao and Hiro-san...
I'd just die if they were getting all flirty and touchy in the house I lived in.
They don't do that.
Hiro's pretty serious about weird stuff like that.
Besides, they're not dating or anything.
In fact, I think if Hiro knew how I felt about Mao...
...he'd probably smile and cheer me on.
You think so? Really?
They might be doing weird stuff while you're not around.

Like kissing... and sex stuff...
HNN
She's got a dirty mind...
That's my brother she's thinking about!
I'd just diieeeeeeee!
We're back.
Welcome back. What's up?
They wanted to know if Motomiya and I are dating.
And then they said "Good, because you two make a bad match," and finally they started a line to confess to Oda right in front of me.
They told me they liked me.
...
DOOM
I turned them down.
Man... Why am I so popular?
Seriously.

火山
*Volcano
Hail and well met!
Damn! Why, today of all days, is Mao not at work with me?
Please watch your step.
They might be doing weird stuff while you're not around.
No... There's no way.
I couldn't deal.
Hmph. Well, Hiro will probably be working overtime, anyway.
I'll probably get home first.

Serious-ly...?! I can go home?
Thanks for today, everyone!
Smile!
Nakamura-san said my smile is soothing, so smile!
Thanks for today!
...
She clearly has a thing for you, Hiro.
No... There's no way...
It's just the weird fantasy of an excessively self-conscious man.
Daiki and Mao just think too much, that's all.
Let's get home, fast.

きゃん
YAP
I'm home.
きゃん YAP
きゃん YAP
Welcome back. You're early.
Yeah. I was surprised, too.
Ooh, I smell the particular aroma of a Mao-made dinner.
I made a special meal!
Where's Daiki?
PANT PANT はっはっはっ
Still at work.
Does he even have time to study?
PANT PANT は、は、
...
We're alone together for the first time in a while.

I'm tired.
FWUMP
ボスッ
I wonder if I could get a massage at this hour.
I'll think about it after dinner.
ぎゅ
SQUEEZE
Croquette, let me hug you. Help me wind down from work.
Huh?! You're going out?
I can give you a massage.
わきわき FLEX FLEX
わきわき FLEX FLEX
Really, Mao? You think you can do it?
The way your hands are moving, it looks weird.
...
I'm fine. You don't need to.
Don't be shy!
I'm not being shy...

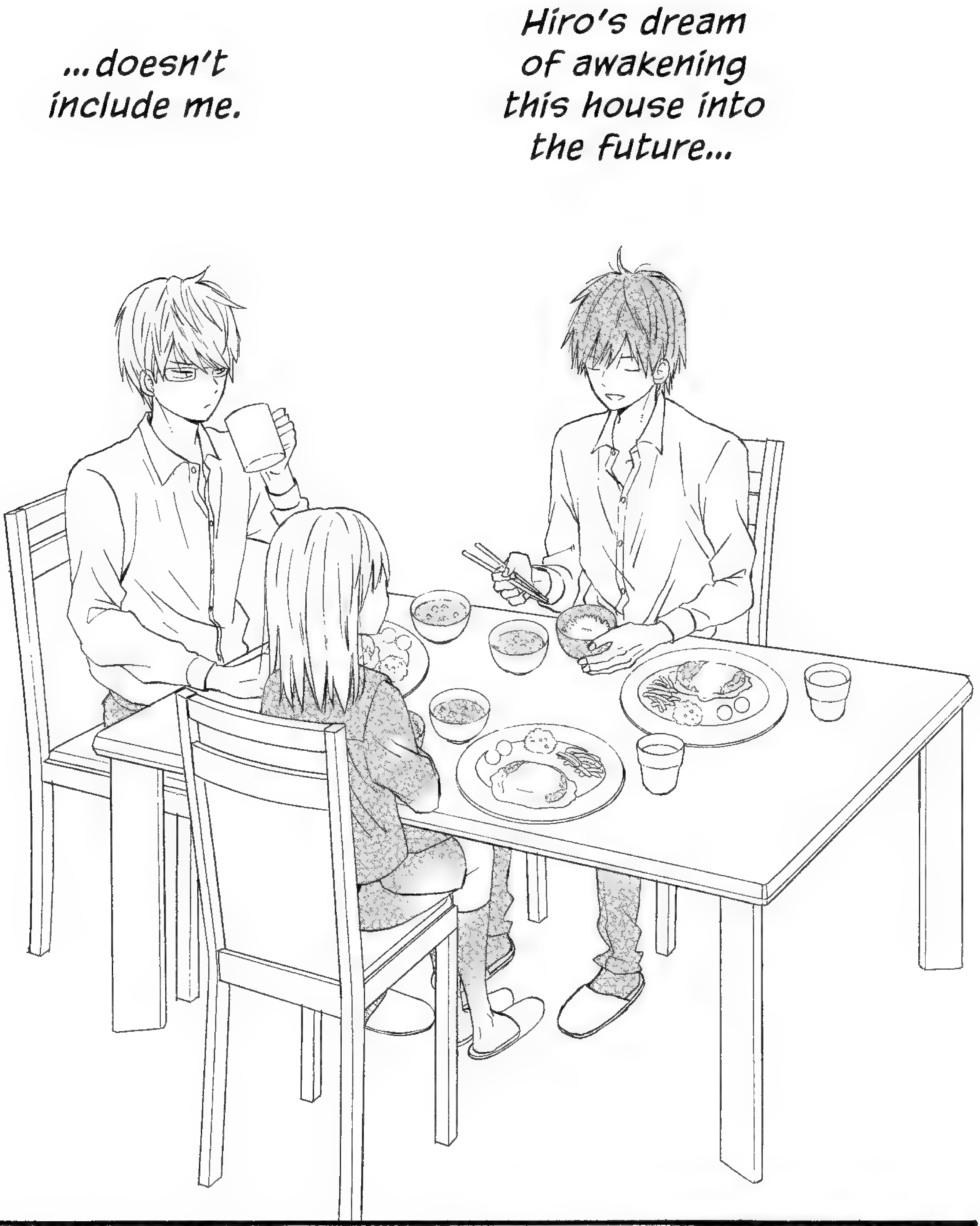
Whoa!
Sexual harassment!
RUB
RUB
PWOOF
After I was so nice to offer, too.
GLANCE
Besides, I want to help you wind down from work, too.
Now that I hear you say it, it sounds kind of unsavory.
Cut it out, dummy!
PAF
Ow!
I've never given a shoulder rub before...
...You can be my practice run.
RUB
RUB
Practice run?! Stop rubbing me right now.

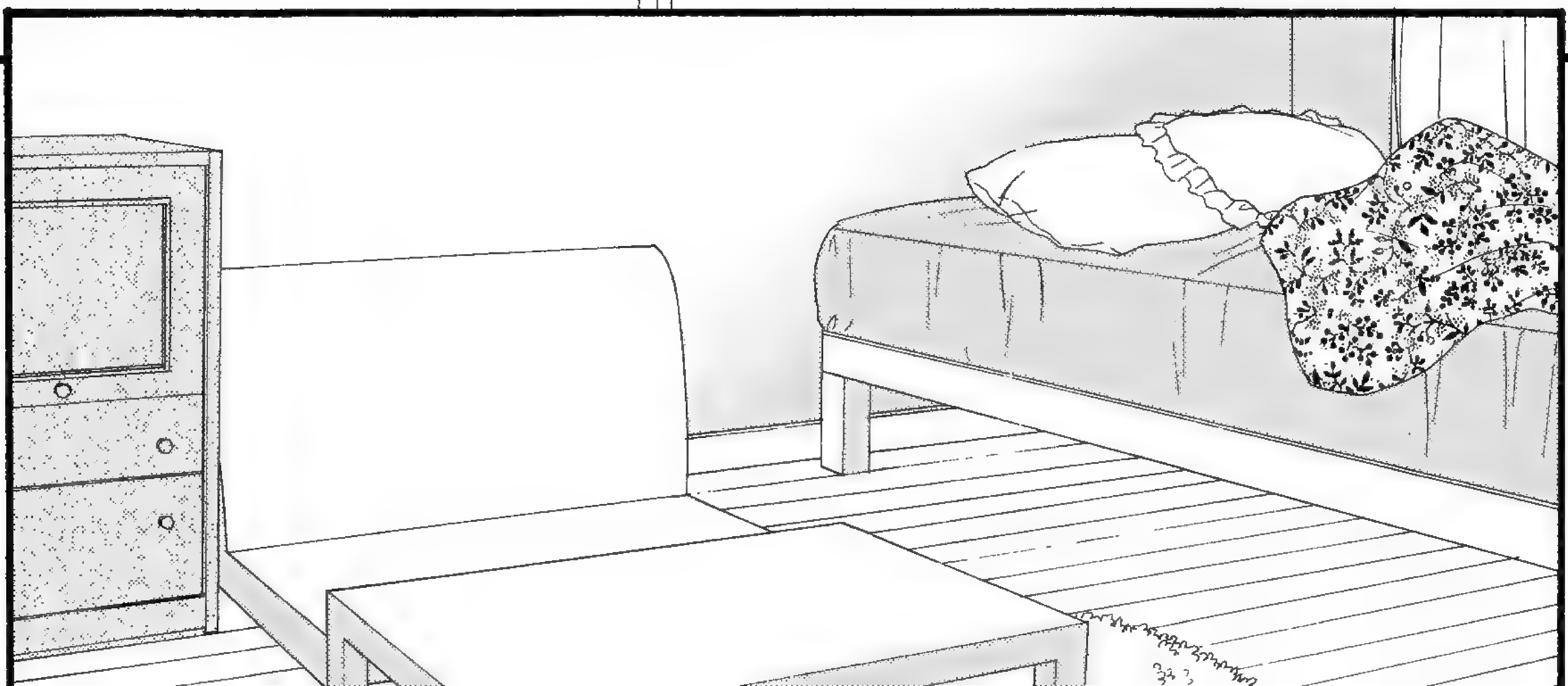
...
Fine... But just a little.
I'm home!
バン! BAM
No way.
Nothing funny's going on!
イラ GRR
イラ GRR
!!
Cut it out, Mao, not there.
How about here? Is this good?
Yeah.

Welcome home, Daiki.
Hey.
I'm already tired of this stupid old gag!
What gag?
If you need a massage, I'll do it. Move, Mao.
Whaaa?!
I'm better at it.
You are, Daiki?

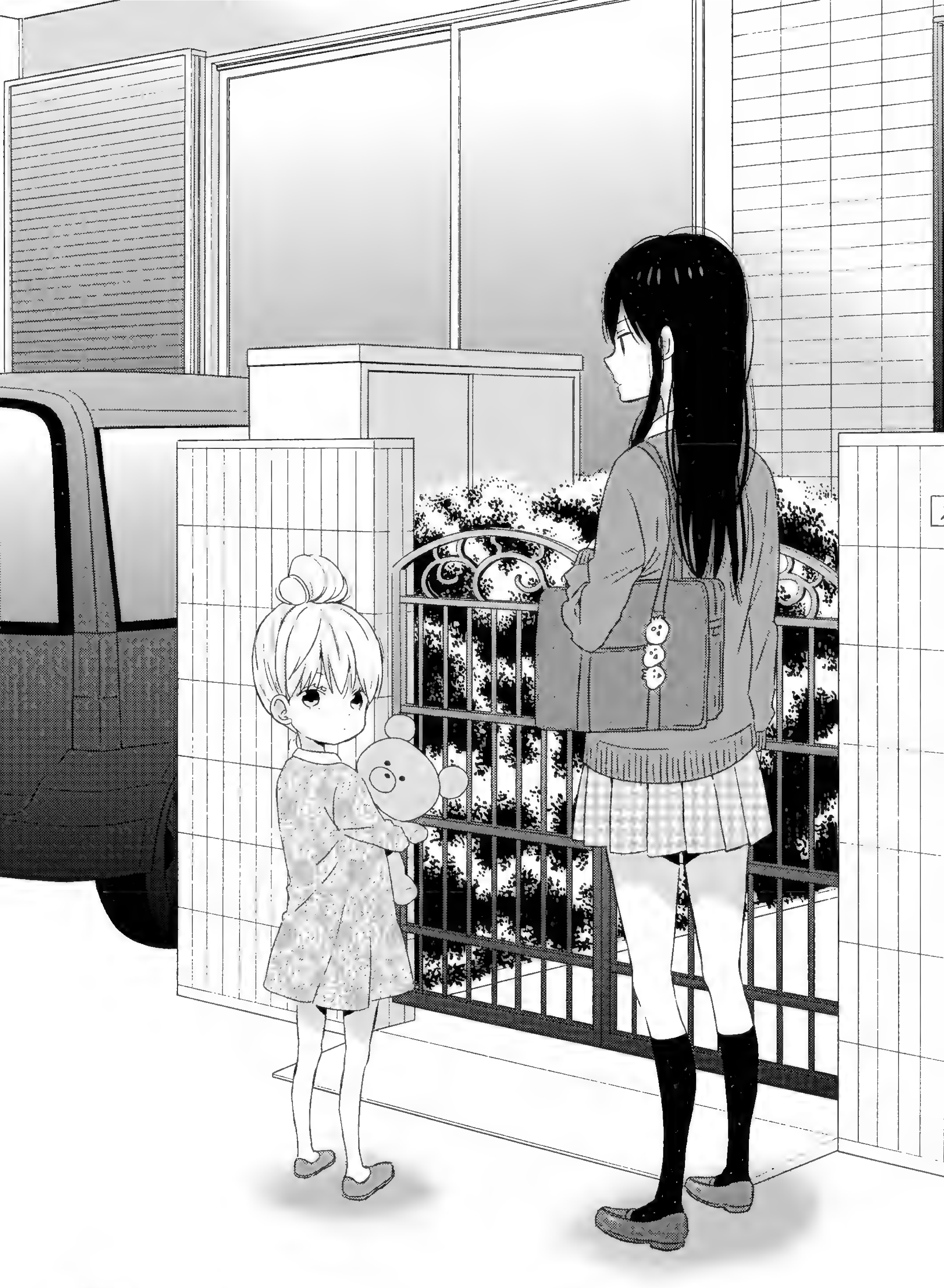
You're scaring me...
KRAK
パキッ
Oh...
That's nice.
I'm way better than Mao.
Daiki stole my excuse to touch Hiro...!

Daiki really can do anything.
He can cook...
He can even give a shoulder massage...
He's good at school...
He can do anything...
He's just...
...way better than me.
When Hina-chan moves back here...
...Hiro's dream will finally be complete.
I haven't forgotten...


Hiro's dream of awakening this house into the future...
...doesn't include me.



せっ SHK
せっ SHK
せっ SHK
せっ SHK
I did it! It looks great!
I guess I'm really good at this!
Maybe because making crafts is like playing by yourself.
I have to...
...work towards my own future.



story 27

Little Sister

ふ
FWOOO
っ
Happy birthday, Yui-chan!
パチ
CLAP
パチ
CLAP
Happy birthday!
H-
Happy birthday!

It's so nice everyone came to celebrate.
Yeah! Um, Mi-chan and Moena-chan said they wanted to come, too!
Uh... Um...
Oh, really? We'll have another party with them.
...
I got you this present!
I'm so proud of it!
Thank you.
...
This is... kinda... weird.
RRRIP
Is it? I think it's nice.
I wonder what's inside...
It's weird on the inside, too.

I'm sorry...
I thought it was cute...
Are you trying to make her cry?
Hey, Yui, I got you this.
!
A plushie!
It's cute, right?
It's cute!
Oh, Mao-chan, please eat.
The tomato soup came out well.
Oh, right.
It's good.

The words...
...won't come out right.
I can't do this! I just can't!
I said I was going to talk to her!
But she didn't even like my present.
I wonder what's going on at Hiro's?
...
Mao, jeez.
You have to eat it all!

It's taken me a while to realize...
...how hard Hiro's worked to make that house a good place for me to be.
Let's go.
トン
KNOCK
トン
KNOCK

It's...
Oh, it's your sister!
ガチャ
KACHK
...
I'm sorry about the weird present...!
...
Um... Um...
And... What else...?

If Hiro were here, he'd...
すとっ
FWUMP
Let's talk.
And then, Mi-chan...
Uh-huh.
...she said my drawings were really good!
Can I see some more?
Yeah, here!
See, I like doggies with long ears!
Ooh, cute!
What cute ears!

...
...Do you like to talk?
?
Y-yeah.
Hmm.
Do you like me, too?
Wh-
Y-
Yes, I like you!
Really?
Y-yeah.
I've been thinking I want to get to know you...
Good!
I thought you might hate me.

It was 'cause of me you ran away from home, right?
It's not your fault!
It's not her fault...
Such a...
...little girl...
Really?

...was feeling so bad...
...because of my selfishness.
...I'm sorry.
PAT
なで
なで
PAT

I'm glad Yui had a good time.
Me, too.
What about you, honey?
Do you think you'll be able to talk to Mao-chan?
...
You've been running from Mao-chan all this time.
Driving her out like that...
I'm not running from anyone, jeez.

She ran away all by herself.
And it's not like I drove her out, either.
Besides... she's already a high schooler.
You know, somewhere inside me, I was always thinking it'd be nice if Mao-chan wasn't here, too.
It was so hard to be alone with you when Mao-chan was around, after all.
So I was honestly relieved when she left.

But I was wrong.
When she left, it blew a huge hole in this home.
A hole in me.
In Yui, too.
And of course, in you.
I know that Mao-chan feels the same.
I know thinking that way at this point is selfish...
But I thought it would be nice if we all became a family, for real.
Mao...

...loves it at the Nakamura place.
She seems so much happier than she was here.
Like back when she was a kid...
...she's happier there now.
Sooner or later, I hope she marries Hiro-kun and is happy.
That'd be the best for Mao.

Do you really feel that way?
Here, Mao-chan.
I boxed up some food for you. Please eat it.
Th- thanks.
That tomato soup was really good.
Can you teach me how to make it next time?

I'd love to!
C'mon!
Okay, okay.
Daad, c'mon!
She'll leave!
I heard you, okay.
Don't pull.
...
Um, um...
I drew this.
You can have it!
Hm?
Thank you.

HIDE
ばっ
You can't look at it right now!
Okay.
Daaad!
PAF
PAF
Hm? Oh.
Yui says she wants to play with you again.

I'll come again!
ZOOM

Okay, time to text Hiro...!
Wait, he just texted me!
From
Subject
Hiro

There's a special sale on eggs, one per person, so get in touch when you're coming home.

Jeez, who does Hiro think I am?
He acts like we're family already!
AON
Oh!
There you are, Mao.

...Seeing two guys at the grocery store together is kind of a weird image.
Is it?
Mao, go pick up the rice, will you? Is it too heavy?
What am I, your servant?!
If anything, I guess you can be our maid.
Right?
Yeah.
Creepy!
I'll go get Mao's portion of rice. Two per person, right?
Yep...
How were things back home?
...
...
Oh, right.

I talked to my dad.
I talked to my sister a lot.
I promised to go back again.
Well, that's good.
It's starting to look like you'll be able to go back.
I got in touch with Hina.
I'll be seeing her the day after the trip ends.
Yeah.
I hope Hina-chan comes home, too.
All right.
I guess I better work hard, too.

So you're really going home, Mao?
I've gotten used to you being around, Mao. It'd be annoying if you just up and disappeared right now.
THUD
ぼすっ
Especially at special deal times like this.
That's awfully rude.
Yeah, what he said!
Well, sorry I was rude.
I just mean I'd miss you.

...
Yeah, you would. I bet you'd miss me.
Don't start crying every time you see a Chonmame and it reminds you of me, okay?
Daiki.
What's with the attitude?! Is that all you have to say?
GRR
Is that all...
Hmm... Okay. Well, I guess I have to pay you guys back now, then.
I'll go get all the one-per-person items, too!
Don't run.

So, how do you really feel, Hiro?
About what?
About Mao leaving.
Are you really okay with it?
Going back home is the best possible outcome for Mao.
There's no point in her hiding out at our place forever.
...As practical as ever.
Not as much as you.
So, let's say...

...that Mao and I start dating. Then you'd be able to hang out with her sometimes.
Would you be able to support us, Hiro?
...Why?
...
Just kidding.

Is there anything else?
They have colored pencils.
I should have given Yui-chan a present like this.
Maybe I wouldn't have made her cry, then.
Oh, yeah!
She drew me a picture.
Let's see.
come play again
Come home soon.
Oh!
She wants me to come play again.

come play again.
Come home soon.
I love my big sister.
I love...
...my big sister.

Didn't expect that.
I had no idea he'd blow up at me.
...
...
PATTER
ガラ
PATTER PATTER
ガラ ガラ
Hiro! Daiki!
Look! She wrote big sister here!
Big. Sis. Ter!
I love my big sister.

Huh? Did something happen between you two?
...
...
Not really.
What's that?
Oh, this.
It's a letter from my little sister, Yui-chan.
She drew a Chon-mame, too.
It's cute...
She was thinking about my present.
And she wrote, "I super-ultra-mega love my big sister"...
She just wrote "love," though.
Only the pure of heart can see it.
You kiddin' me?
You should follow my lead, Hiro.
Then you can get closer to Hina-chan.
ずい
STARE
ずい
STARE
my big sister

Do you have any practical advice, ma'am?
Well, hm.
...
はっ
GASP
I reached out to her because I thought of Hiro.
It's a trade secret.
What's with the self-satisfied look?!
I'm happy.
...
ばし!
BAP
Ow.

Let's go home.
TRIP INFORMATION
TRAVEL ITINERARY
1
羽田空港→→→仙台空港→→→仙台→→→
昼食→→→仙台城→→→瑞鳳殿→→→宿
2
宿→→→仙台市博物館→→→昼食
→→→仙台街歩き→→→仙台空港→→→羽田空港
ばん
BAM
5:00 P.M., arrive at lodgings ...!
Dinner's from 7:00 P.M....
I see, I see.
It's an overnight, so they'll probably drink and go to the hot springs...

What're you doing?
Just put that stuff in the fridge.
All right, already.
...
Hiro.
You'll be drinking on your trip...
Probably, yeah.
Will you wear a robe?
Probably, yeah.
Will you use the hot springs?
Yeah, probably.
What's up?
AAAAAAAAAAH!
I love you, Nakamura-san.
You're cute, Sugimoto-san.
AAAAAAAAAH!

AAAAH!
Don't just come in my room every time you want to whine.
Right.
Sorry.
I'll do my homework...
I think you're just over-thinking it.
I talked to Hiro, and he doesn't really think about her that way at all.
Damn.
What am I even saying?
Why am I cleaning up after Hiro?
But...
Sugimoto-san is so cute and so nice!
You're so stubborn.
If you're that worried, just draw something on his face.
Draw on him...

Come to think of it, we're going to be all alone while Hiro's on his trip.
What do you want to eat?
All alone...
Huh, you're right.
Just so you know, I'll be cooking the food.
WHAAAT?!
Or maybe you want to go out.
We have to take care of Croquette, so no.
Unless you want to go out? I'm pretty good at staying home alone, so you can leave it to me.
I didn't really have plans to go anywhere.
I don't have to work, either.

Well, then. Let's just stay home and study.
Yeah, all right.
I wonder if we'll get a huge thunderstorm or something...
Why?
That'd be bad. Croquette's afraid of thunder.
You should be scared of thunder, too.
All dogs hate thunder, I think.
Ah, I've gotta go to bed.
It's my turn to walk Croquette tomorrow morning.
Night, Daiki.
Night.
バタン
KLAK
Hiro.
Hnn.
On your way to bed?

Studying in Daiki's room again, huh?
I know, studying hard. I'm such a good kid.
...
I'm not going to congratulate you for spending that much time alone with a boy so close to your age.
Jeez, grandpa!
It's just Daiki!

Yeah, that's the problem.
Hiro's acting weird.

story 28

Office Retreat

Be sure to lock the doors!
And take good care of Croquette.
Don't you have school, Mao?
Don't just zone out. Go get ready. You'll be late.
It's early, so I'm gonna zone out.
Is it?

I can't concentrate on anything but the idea of Radical and Hiro going to the hot springs together.
ぐぬぬぬぬ
RRRRGHHH
I'll draw on him! On his face! I'll draw something crazy!
SHING
Hiro, c'mere for a sec.
?
I want to put a spell on you.
So things will go well with Hina-chan.
Sit down and close your eyes.
Close my eyes? Don't do anything weird.
You're way too suspicious of me!
Because you have a long rap sheet.

Hm.
Ooh!
Uhh... No fair. I want to do weird stuff to him...!
ドキ BA-DUM
ドキ BA-DUM
ドキ BA-DUM
Done yet?
ドキドキ BA-DUM BA-DUM
ドキ BA-DUM
...
きゅー SQUISH
!

Mao! What is this about?!
I told you, it's a spell!
You drew on me!
Quiet down. It's too early to be that loud.
You'll bother the neighbors.
Look, Daiki!
Mao drew all over my forehead!
This is preschool-level childish!
You're freaking out too much over a high school prank.
Suits you.
No, it doesn't!
I'll have to wear a hat.

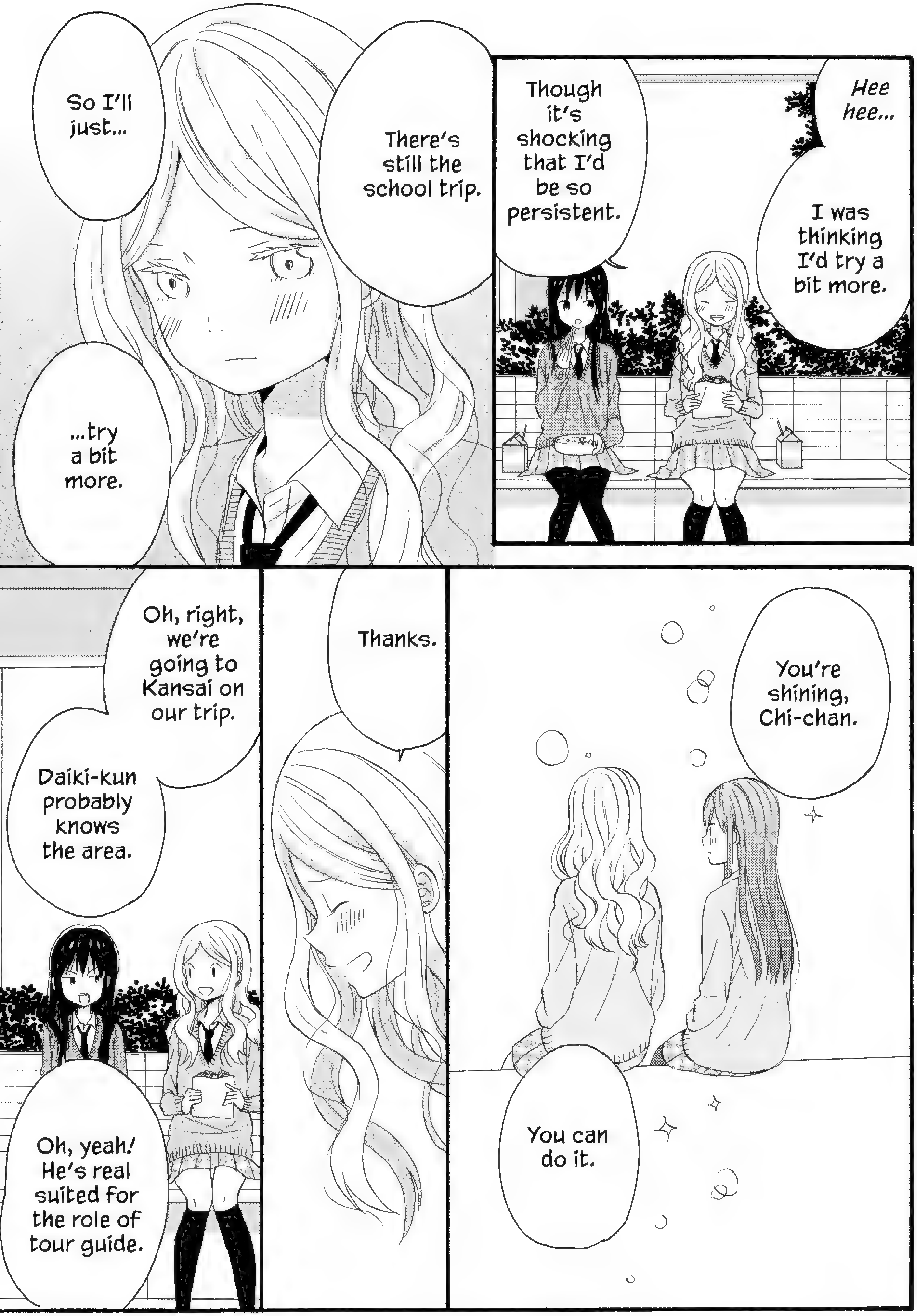
Are you in touch with Hina?
Yeah, we've been texting back and forth.
If Hina comes back, where's Mao gonna sleep? Mom and Dad's room?
Ah...!
I'll be going back home soon!
It'll be fine!
...
Yeah.
Just a little longer.

It'll get really lively in here if Hina comes home, too.
I feel almost like I never lived here alone at all.
Thanks, you two.
It's weird to be thanked...
This is my house, too.
That's true.
Right, I'm the only freeloader here.
Yep, that's also true.
But still, thanks.

All right, see you guys later.
Have a good time.
Daiki...
...while I'm gone...
What?

Take good care of Croquette and Mao.
Call me if anything happens.
...
Got it.
Have fun.
Hmmm, going on a trip with Radical-san, huh?
That's a bummer.
I mean, they're at a hot springs resort! They'll be wearing robes? It's so dramatic!
You said it.

Wow.
Your lunch looks really good again today, Mao.
Daiki made it.
What?! Daiki-kun can cook?
Yup.
Wow, cool. I want to start cooking on my own and stop having bread every day.
This is no time to complain about not wanting to get up.
...
I want to make lunch...
...for Oda-kun.
Yeah.


Hee hee...
I was thinking I'd try a bit more.
Though it's shocking that I'd be so persistent.
There's still the school trip.
So I'll just...
...try a bit more.
You're shining, Chi-chan.
You can do it.
Thanks.
Oh, right, we're going to Kansai on our trip.
Daiki-kun probably knows the area.
Oh, yeah! He's real suited for the role of tour guide.

Daiiiiki!
I heard we're going to Kansai for our school trip.
I know.
Why do we have to go all the way to Kansai on our trip...
I'm excited.
I want to go to Uzumasa Studio Park.
You want to go? It's kind of in the middle of nowhere.
Arashi Mountain is close by, though.
Daiki, you really do know everything!
Let's go do stuff together, then.

...
Okay.
Oh, right, Chi-chan's—
...
Actually, nevermind.
If it's about Oda, I already know.
Oh?! You know?!
It's pretty obvious.
You're amazing.
Though I guess I knew right away, too!

Did you now?
Have you noticed anything about me?
Hm?
?
?
Your bangs are longer?
That's enough.

Aaah!
It's so awesome!
Not much to Sendai Castle, is there?
I want to eat zunda*
I want beef tongue
I thought there'd at least be some stone walls left.
カシャ KACHK
カシャ KACHK
カシャ KACHK
カシャ KACHK

*Edamame paste

KACHK
カシャ
KACHK
カシャ
KACHK
カ
シャ
KACHK
カシャ
Sendai Castle was built by the feudal lord of Sendai, Date Masamune.
The view from the angle over there is very good for photos.
Oh, I'm fine!
I want photos from every single angle, 360 degrees!
She's super hyped up.
KACHK
カシャ
カシャ
KACHK
カシャ
KACHK
You want me to take one with you, Sugimoto-san?
Huh?!

A picture with Nakamura-kun?!
In front of Ma-kun?! What do I do?!
カシャ
KACHK
Here you go.
Thank you so much.
He meant with me in it...
You're really in love, aren't you?
What?! I don't know what you mean!
With Date Masamune.
Oh, yeah.
He surprised me.
The schedule says we're going to be leaving early in the morning, but I was thinking I'd stay back and go to Matsushima, too.

Anything over there?
Yes! Ma— I mean, Date Masamune built a temple there... Uh, it's a national treasure.
And the Date Masamune history museum is there, also.
Wow...
Ah, do you want to...
...maybe come with me...
...Nakamura-san...?
I'm sorry, I have plans tomorrow in Sendai, so I'll be staying behind.
Oh, you do?
I was hoping we'd at least get to ride back together.
But I guess not.

This is no good. I haven't said anything.
Will I really be able to confess my feelings to him like this?
Ummmmmm!
Yeah?
Well...
?
It's nothing.
I'm sorry.

Date Masamune's mausoleum has such a long stairway.
たっ TMP
たっ TMP
たっ TMP
たっ TMP
Yeah...
She sure is energetic.
She is.
PLIP
PLIP
Oh, it's raining.
It sure is.
Don't slip, all right?
I wonder what...
...Daiki and Mao are up to right about now?

FSHHHH
Oh.
It's started to rain.
Cro-quette!
Hurry up, let's go home.
Go on, you can poop!
...and surrounding areas are under a flash flood warning.
Humid air is coming up from the south.

You jinxed us, Daiki.
Now it's really storming.
Don't make this my fault.
I wonder...
...if Hiro's okay.
I guess it's raining over there, too.
At this point, he's probably at the dinner party. The rain won't stop that.
Though they won't be able to use the outdoor baths.
Dinner party...
Baths...
I should have drawn more on his face.
She really is preschool level...

ゴロゴロ RUMMMBLE
ゴロゴロ… RUMMMBLE
Ooh, it's thundering.
C'mere, Croquette.
Don't be scared, it's okay.
Hey...
Why did you say you wanted a huge thunderstorm to come, anyway?

Think about it.
Think?
ピカッ
SHING
ゴロゴロ
RUMMMMBLE
ゴロゴロゴロゴロ
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

...
Do you like the rain?
Why would I?
I hate the rain.
I wish it'd never rain again.
Y-you hate the rain that much?
You want to come over here, too, Daiki?

Wh...?
Why would I?!
ゴロ
RUMBLE
ゴロ
RUMBLE
ゴロ
RUMBLE
Jeez.
ゴロ
RUMBLE
ゴロ
RUMBLE
ゴロ
RUMBLE
ゴロ
RUMBLE
ゴロ...
RUMBLE

Maybe I will go...
...over there.
Okay.
You know... I think...
...the rain...

...makes me think of you crying.
What are you talking about?
I'm not a kid anymore.

…
Are you really that scared, Daiki?
This is embarrassing.
I'm scared.
FSHHHH

FSHHHH
MESSAGE
CONTACTS
Send
ABC
スペース
改行

Hina
The rain is bad out there. Are you okay? I hope it stops before I get over there tomorrow.

Whoo... That was a nice bath.
Let's head out, Nakamura.
Yeah.
It's seriously coming down out there.
It sure is. Wish we could've used the outdoor bath.

I wonder if Daiki and Mao are okay.
Oh!
Hey, it's Sugimoto-san!
Oh, no, I'm not wearing makeup!
You look pretty much the same, though.
I... I don't?
It's true, you look just the same.

Oh, we were going back to our room to drink. You want to come, too, Sugimoto?
Hey, don't make plans for me.
I have plans tomorrow, so I'm done drinking.
Oh, really?
Um...
Can I come along anyway?
Yeah!

ぐぉー SNORE
ぐぉー SNORE
Jeez, you just wanted to drink, didn't you?
So don't pass out right away!
Sorry I can't drink along with you, Sugimoto-san.
Oh, no.
I just wanted to come, is all.
...
Oh, yeah?
Well, that's good.

Uh-um...
Yes?
I-if you can... When you're done tomorrow...
...would you like to go back with me?
Sure.
But I don't know when I'll be done.
It might be really late...
...or it might be early.
It'll probably be too much trouble...
...so I'll go home alone.
But thanks a lot.
O-oh... I see.
We should have put Matsushima on the schedule...
Then we could have all gone together.

Yeah.
FSHHH
It's really raining out there.
I'm worried about everyone back home.
Your brother...
...and Mao-san.

Yes.
May I ask...
...what it is you're planning...
...for tomorrow?
Does it have to do with Mao-san?
Mao?
No, it doesn't.
I'm going to see my sister.
Sugimoto-san...
...it's getting late, shouldn't you go to your room?
I'm going to sleep soon, too.

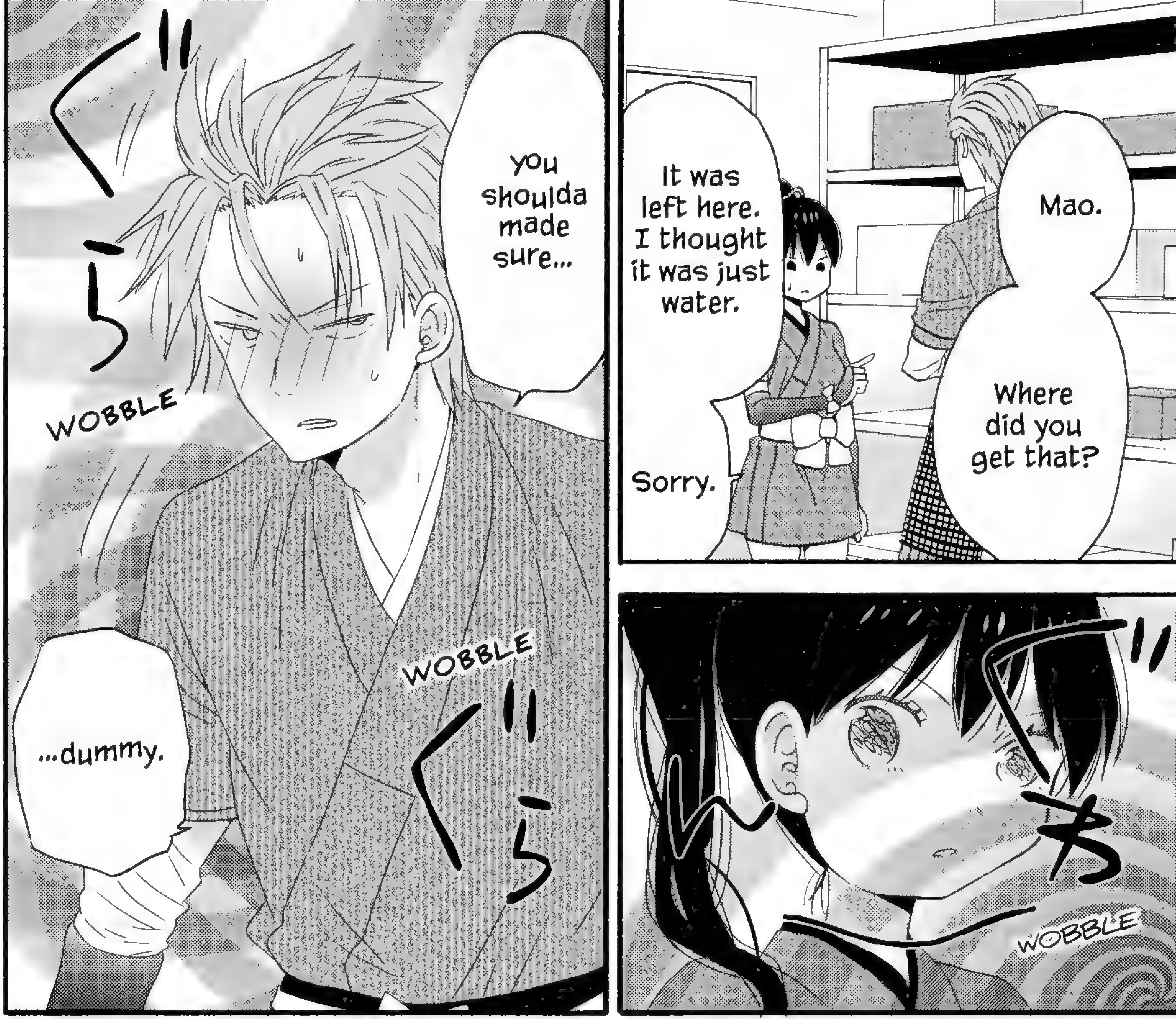
Just a bit longer.
Can I just stay for a little longer?
There's something I want to talk to you about.
And I want to talk to you more.
I'd like to get to know you more.

Mao and I both...
...think that lady has a thing for you, Hiro.
FSHHHH

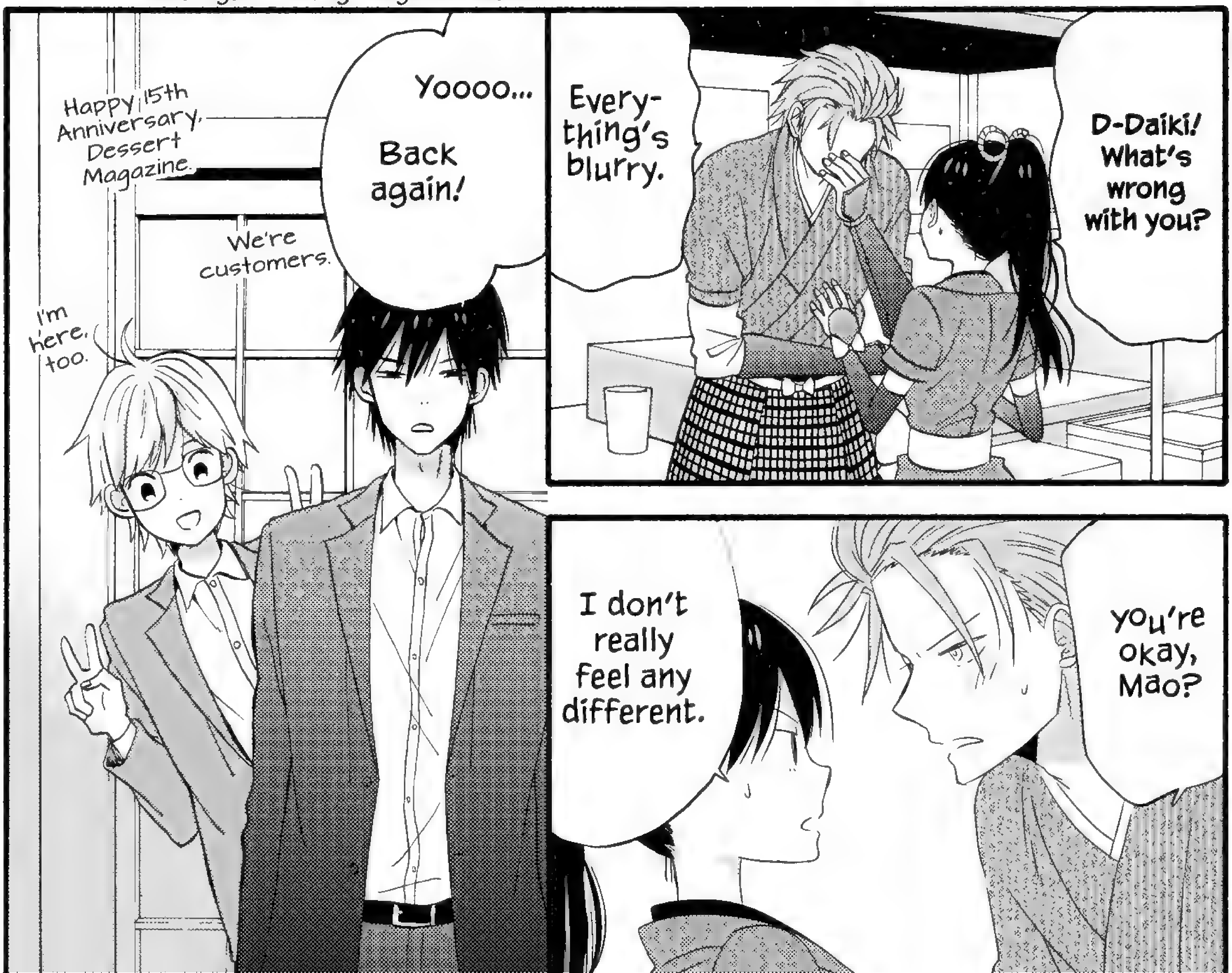
To be continued...

EXTRA CHAPTER ① The Civil War Bar Drunkard Diary

I'm so tired. There are a lot of customers today.
I'm thirsty.
I guess I just have to keep holding myself back.
Here, Daiki.
Drink this, and let's go back to work.
Thanks.
GULP
?! What is this stuff?
COUGH
KAFF
KAFF
This is sake!
Damn it! What a cheap gag!


Mao.
Where did you get that?
It was left here. I thought it was just water.
Sorry.
WOBBLE
you shoulda made sure...
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
...dummy.

Underaged drinking is against the law.


D-Daiki! What's wrong with you?
Every-thing's blurry.
You're okay, Mao?
I don't really feel any different.
Yoooo...
Back again!
We're customers.
I'm here, too.
Happy 15th Anniversary, Dessert Magazine.

Hail and well met!
...Met.
WAFT
The hell? You two smell like alcohol!
What's wrong with this restaurant?
Don't let underage kids drink!
We thought it was water, but it was sake.
HMMM...
Don't do stupid random stuff!
What are you doing, Daiki? Are you okay?
Hmmm...
Daiki's drunk...
Are you a cheap drunk, too?
I don't think he's okay.
That's kind of lame.
Shut up!

HUG
ぎゅ〜む♡
Wha?!
You seem super not okay!
Let her go! Go drink water, Daiki!
PUUUSH
ぐい
Mao's so cute...
ぎゅ♡
HUG
Hey now, hey now!
Here, Daiki, you can have this. Treasure it.
すっ
SHF

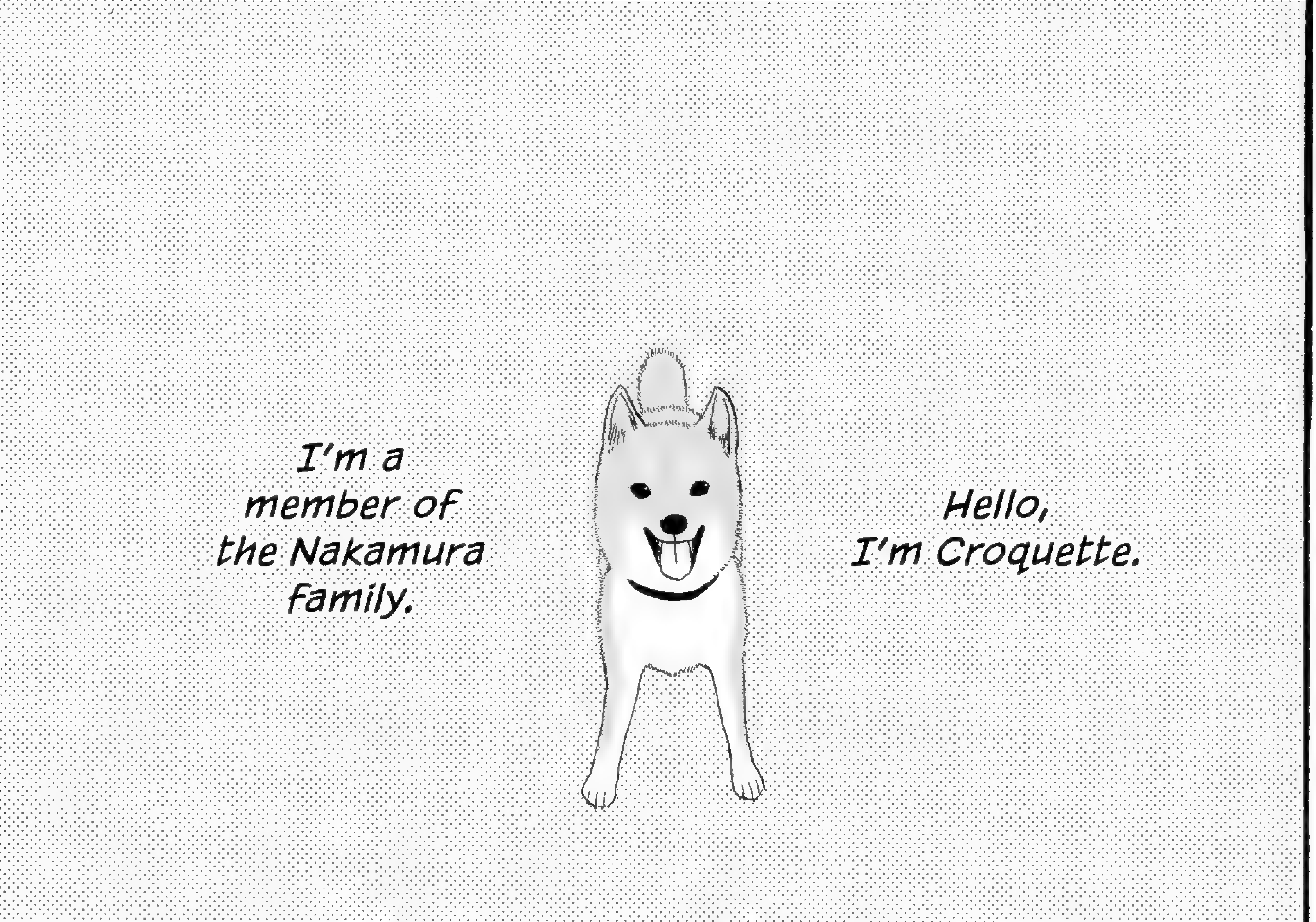
Chon-mame's ...
...so cute.
Nuh-uh, not true.
Hiro's not cute at all.
Are you even drunk at all?!
I guess Daiki's the kind of drunk who just loves everything and thinks everything is cute.
He's been like this for a while.
Really?!
...You're not drunk, Mao?
Ooh, Hiro-kun, looks like I'm just a li'l drunk... ♡
Not at all! I'm totally fine!
What the...
You're awfully honest in bonus chapters...

Yep, Mao's way cuter than Chonmame.
What do you mean, "yep"?!
Go do your job!
Let her go!
It's no use. I'll just have to work like this.
Are you kidding?
Party of two, seating now!
GRRRM
Hiro seems unhappy...
...
HUH?
Don't tell me...
Hiro's... jealous?!

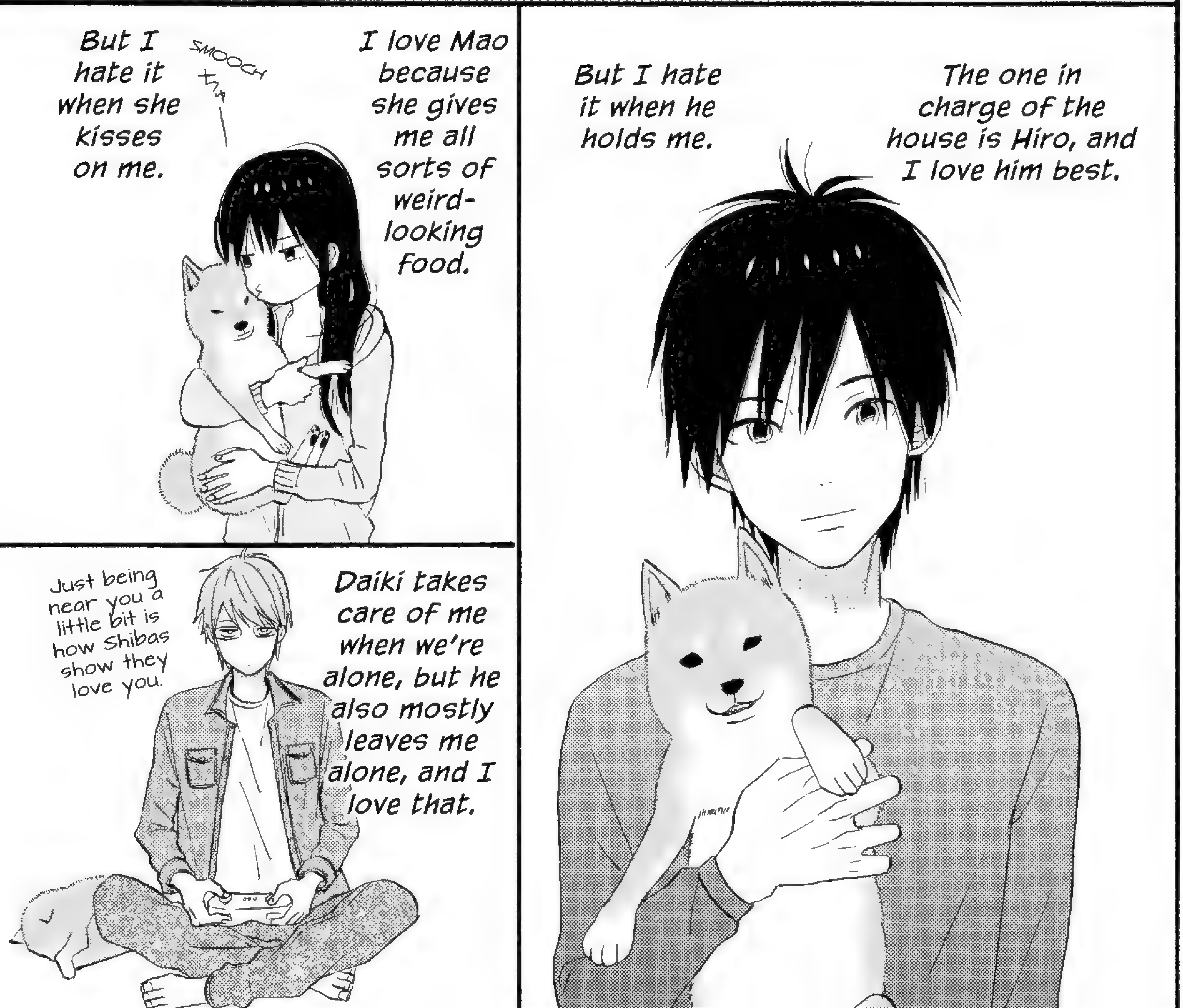
No way...
むー
CUDDLE
ぎゅ
It can't be...!
Hey! What do you think you're doing?!
Are you starting to get drunk, too?!
Is he jealous? Is he?
Daiki, get ahold of yourself already!

Well, this is...
...certainly a blessing.
This mood makes me feel like we might have a special drama CD on the way!
Please buy the special-edition volume that includes the CD!
I'm gonna be in it, too. Akabane-san does my voice!
A casual ad all of a sudden?!
Huh?
Oh, Hiro's here.
Hail and well met!!
...

Extra Chapter/End


Hello, I'm Croquette.
I'm a member of the Nakamura family.

EXTRA CHAPTER ② The Dog and Her Home


The one in charge of the house is Hiro, and I love him best.
But I hate it when he holds me.
I love Mao because she gives me all sorts of weird-looking food.
SMOOCH
But I hate it when she kisses on me.
Daiki takes care of me when we're alone, but he also mostly leaves me alone, and I love that.
Just being near you a little bit is how Shibas show they love you.

It seems like there's one more member of this family.
I haven't yet met the little sister, Hina-chan.
But I'm looking forward to meeting her someday.
Because everyone else is looking forward to meeting her.
And there are two more.
There used to be a mom and a dad in this house.
I don't know them.
Daiki and Hiro talk about them very wistfully, so I'd like to meet them someday.
I don't think that can happen, though.

I just know that they've gone to somewhere far, far away.
I know that all three of them are sad.
Hiro always asks me, "Are you happy you came here?"
But I've been in this place for as long as I've known. I'm not happy or sad or anything.
This is my home.

I'm home.
わん BARK
わん BARK
わん BARK
It's Hiro.
Welcome home, Hiro.
Welcome home.
しばのきもち
*Shiba's Feelings
At a glance, they look pretty normal, but they're both happy inside.
What's with those faces?
Try to look happy, will you?
I'm happy, too.
Even though I hate that he's holding me.
Hiro, she'll shed on your suit.
Finally, everyone's home.
Sometimes, Hiro doesn't come home until the sun comes up, and I just can't calm down.
ガッ CRUNCH
ガッ CRUNCH
I like it best when everyone's here.
ガッ CRUNCH
ガッ CRUNCH
I can finally eat my dinner.

So I love the days no one has to leave.
We can all be together all day.
Sometimes Mao holds me tight and says, "I'm going to have to leave you, too, Croquette."
I wonder why she says that...
Just like this is my home...
...this is Mao's home, too.
So why does she talk like that?
I don't understand.

Because I love the weird-shaped treats Mao gives me...
And what I said before is still true...
...I love it best when we're all together.
And when they all have the day off, everyone and me and Wakaba-chan can stay in...
...and eat snacks and take naps.
Forever.
And that's a promise.

Extra Chapter 2/End

Next volume Announcement

All right!
I just have to...
I have to tell him...
...that I like him...
...while we're in Sendai.
Can I just stay for a little longer?
There's something I want to talk to you about.

Radical-san has hardened her resolve...

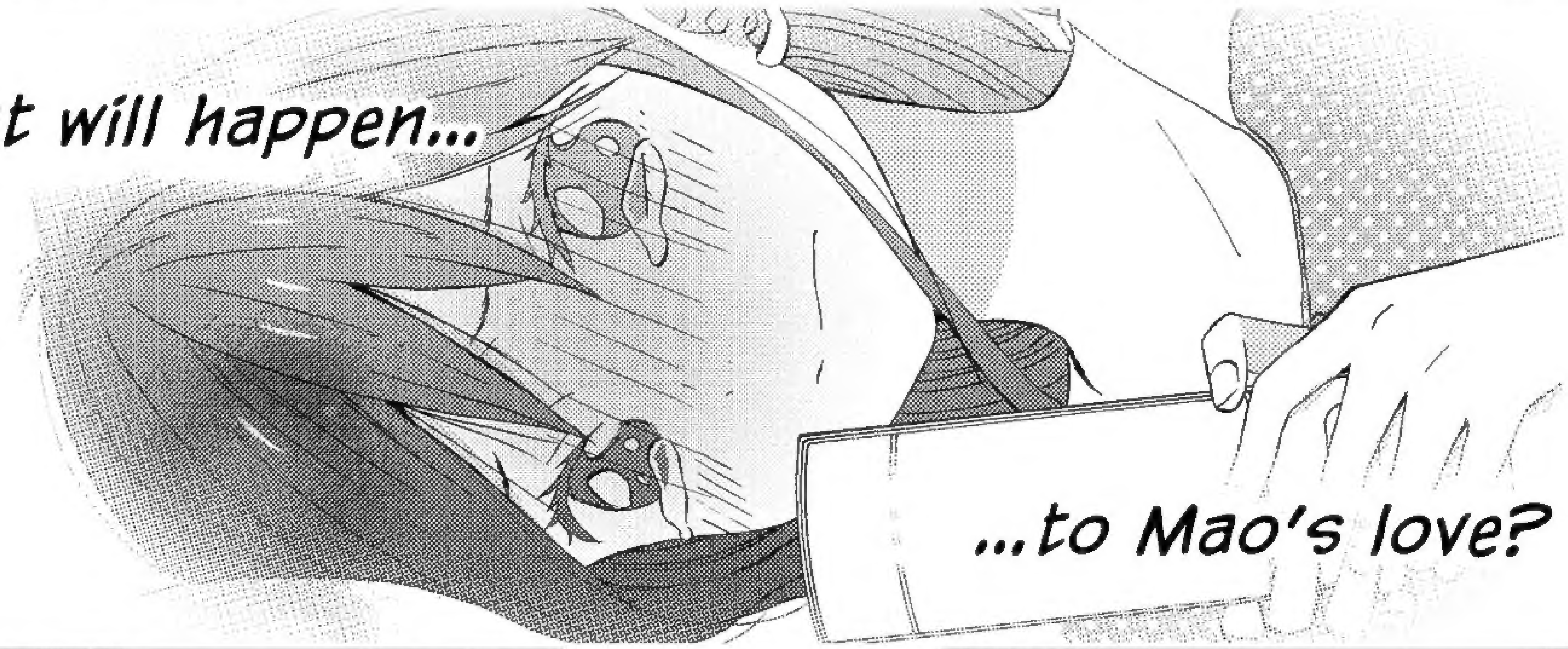
And finally...

Has the time come for her to make her feelings about Hiro known?!

And back at home, where Daiki and Mao are all alone...

Daiki is...?!

And what will happen...



...to Mao's love?

...what will change?!

And when Hiro meets Hina...

HOUSE of the SUN 8

Popular right now!

Hmph. This is not a bad turn of events.

House of the Sun 7

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